

Viri Christi



Objective: From time immemorial, men have pondered over the purpose or meaning of their lives. Surprisingly, most serious thinkers have concluded that there is one thing that all men desire above all else, namely, to be happy. Though these men may agree that happiness is the goal of our lives, there is vast disagreement over the object that will bring about man's happiness. For Christian thinkers, happiness is something to be understood while bearing in mind that a human life has a goal. Christian thinkers (ex. Jesus, Augustine, Aquinas) have always held that this is nothing short of God himself. In this unit, we will examine the Beatitudes, Christ's advice for attaining happiness in this life and the next.

I. Episode #1 – Introduction to the Beatitudes (John 10:10 – “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”)

1. Beatitude

- a. What is the meaning of life? – The two H's, happiness and heaven. We are called to be perfectly **happy** with God in **heaven** for all eternity. I can confidently say that the only way to true happiness is through friendship with God through Jesus Christ and His Church.

2. The Virtues, Gifts, Beatitudes, and Our Father

- a. Servais Pinckaers – “The Beatitudes are Christ's answer to the question of happiness (*The Source of Christian Ethics*, 150).
- b. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange – “St. Augustine and St. Thomas admirably explain the order of these eight beatitudes. An ascending order, it is the inverse of that of the Our Father, which descends from the consideration of the glory of God to that of our personal needs and of our daily bread” (*The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, Vol. 1 165).

Ways of the Interior Life	Virtue	Gift	Beatitude	Promise	Our Father
Purgative Way	Temperance & Hope	Fear	Poor in Spirit	Kingdom of God	Hollowed be thy Name
	Justice	Piety	Meek	Inherit the Earth	Thy Kingdom Come
	Faith	Knowledge	Mourn	Consolation	Thy will be done
Illuminative Way	Fortitude	Fortitude	Justice	Satisfied	Daily bread
	Prudence	Counsel	Mercy	Holy joy and intimacy with God	Forgive trespasses
Unitive Way	Faith	Understanding	Pure in Heart	Beatific Vision	Avoid Temptation
	Charity	Wisdom	Peacemakers	Children of God	Deliver us from Evil
			Suffer Persecution		

II. Episode #2 – Magnanimity (Matthew 5:48 – “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”)

1. Magnanimity means "greatness of soul." – Adolphe Tanquerey defines magnanimity as the “noble and generous disposition to undertake great things for God and for the neighbor” (510). This is the virtue by which man pursues what is great and honorable in his life, even if it is difficult. The virtue that gives a person the confidence he needs to persevere in doing good things.
2. One Vice Opposed to Magnanimity: Faintheartedness (Pusillanimity – ST II-II, q. 133) – Faintheartedness (Pusillanimity) is shrinking back from using one’s God-given talents for our good, the good of one’s neighbor, or the glory of God (a. 1). Two Causes of Faintheartedness (a. 2): Ignorance of one’s own ability, and the fear of failure.

III. Episode #3 – Humility (James 4:6 – “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”)

1. Humility – Philippians 2:5-11: “Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.”
2. Magnanimity – Philippians 2:9-11: “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
3. St. Thomas Aquinas on Humility and Magnanimity – “A twofold virtue is necessary with regard to the difficult good: one, to temper and restrain the mind, lest it tend to high things immoderately; and this belongs to the virtue of humility: and another to strengthen the mind against despair, and urge it on to the pursuit of great things according to right reason; and this is magnanimity (ST II-II, q. 161, a. 1).”

IV. Episode #4 – Jesus Went up on the Mountain (Matthew 5:1-2)

1. Matthew 5:1-2 – “Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them.”
2. Place of Refuge: “Fleeing from the Crowds” – Christ had three places of refuge, just as there are three ways men take refuge in God (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 398):
 - a. Mount of Olives (John 8:1) – In the protection of the divine loftiness, which is signified by the mountain.
 - b. Boat (Luke 5:1-3) – In the Church, which the boat indicates.
 - c. Desert (Mark 6:31) – In the solitude of religious life, which is understood by the desert, through the contempt of temporal things.